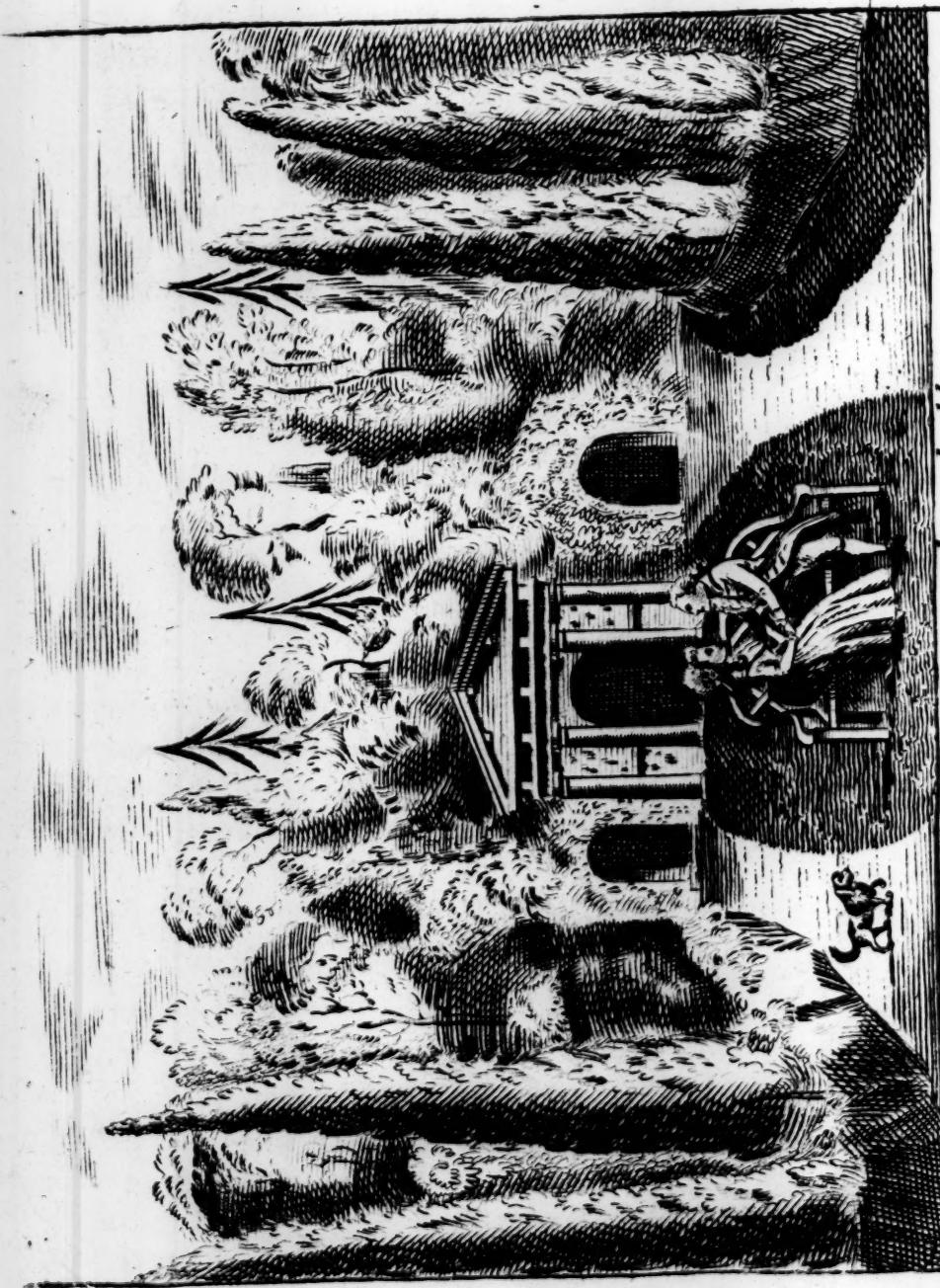


Werter & Charlotte



Werter & Charlotte

44
Werter and Charlotte,

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AND

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WERTER AND CHARLOTTE.

CHAP. I.

*An Account of CHARLOTTE—Her Situation—Her
Tenderness to her Brothers and Sisters—Death of her
Mother, &c.*

CHARLOTTE was the eldest child of a family of distinction, in one of the most fertile principalities in Germany, though much reduced in their circumstances by the precarious disposition of Fortune. Her father died when she was very young; and her mother, who loved her husband tenderly, soon followed the partner of her heart to the grave. Finding her dissolution near, she spoke thus to Charlotte, whose filial affection never let her quit the bedside of her dying parent,

“Charlotte,” said she, “I am soon going to join
“your father in the regions of bliss; my death is
“near, which I would embrace without a tear, but
“for those dear pledges of love I must leave behind.
“You, my good girl, must supply the place of pa-
“rents; you must form their infant minds to reli-
“gion and virtue. Small is the patrimony I can be-
“queathe you, which you must manage to the best
“advantage. Fortune, perhaps, may once turn her
“wheel in your favour, and heaven will surely re-
“gard the uplifted hands of my little innocents.
“You must consider, my dear, that riches do not
“alone constitute happiness, but virtue will insure
“what Fortune cannot; it is with pleasure I have
“ever observed your strict adherence to religion and
“every moral duty, your regard to learning, and un-
“exampled assiduity with your needle, the advantage
“of which qualification may be of the utmost service
“to you. The ladies in the vicinity of your cottage
“will be ready to reward industry and innocence;
“and should any of them honour you with a visit,
“they will be pleased with your neatness and oeco-
“nomy; your motherly affection to the rest of
“my unprovided orphans, and prompt the heart of
“Benevolence to supply them with food and rai-
“ment, and insure their future way to heaven by
“deeds of Charity. Blessed Charity; thou divinest
“attribute of Religion, it is thou that coverist a
“multitude of sins. O, my God! let me not be
“presumptuous when I say, in my prosperity my
“heart was still dictated by thee. My ear was ever
“open to the voice of distress; I wept with the wi-
“dow and orphans; their sorrows were my own, and
“speedy relief came forth to bless them—but Fate
“stopped my hand and all I had to give was fruitless
“commiseration;

“ commiseration; cold comfort, indeed, for the naked
“ and forlorn; but Heaven is just, to whose protec-
“ tion I now leave my helpless offspring.”

Here she sunk upon her pillow, when Charlotte, with eyes streaming with unfeigned sorrow, clasped the hand of her dying mother.

“ My dear parent,” cried the amiable maid, “ leave
“ me not in this affliction. Alas! I am not capable
“ of this great charge; yet, if it will yield you any
“ comfort, I solemnly promise I will, to the utmost
“ of my abilities, fulfill your desire; and if my sor-
“ row for the loss of the dearest of parents will per-
“ mit me cheerfully to perform the task you set me,
“ no exertions shall be wanting on my part, no means
“ left untried, which honesty and industry can sug-
“ gest, but I will pursue; that your spirit from the
“ regions of the blessed shal look down well pleased
“ and satisfied with the conduct of your mourning
“ daughter.—But, O my mother! cast your eyes
“ once more on me; give me your last blessing—be-
“ stow it upon all of us.”—Let them attend,” said
her mother, leaning with much difficulty, a little
raised on one side, the children were now all kneel-
ing by the side of the bed—while thus the mother ut-
tered her last solemn farewell.—“ O, my God! who
“ seest all our actions, and dost govern impartially
“ the creature thou hast made, who knowest how
“ imperfect we are, let thy Divine Providence watch
“ over these helpless orphans; let thy guardian spirit
“ keep them from evil; protect them from the insults
“ of the wicked and degenerate; fill their infant
“ minds with sensibility and true benevolence; let
“ their steps be directed by Wisdom, and Virtue pre-
“ scribe

“side over all their actions. And oh, my God! let
“the blessing of a dying parent make them happy,
“and ever ready to obey thy Divine Will.” Here
she grew more faint, when Charlotte presented the
children, one by one, whom she kissed with the ut-
most tenderness; then kissing Charlotte she sunk in
her arms, and expired.

“She is gone!” cried the afflicted fair. “Ere
“long she will be a saint among saints, an angel
“among angels: even now she gains the never-end-
“ing regions of happiness. O let thy shade oft visit
“thy afflicted daughter! Inspire her how to act;
“point out what you would have her do, that I in all
“things may perform thy behest.”

Charlotte now stood like the figure of Niobe, all
tears; her little charge caught sorrow from her eyes,
and wept in concert. After a long silence, suddenly
recollecting herself, she said, “All this sorrow is
“fruitless—I must not give way to it, but let Reason
“be my guide, and strengthen me to perform the will
“of my departed parents.—Poor clay-cold image, I
“will try to do thy bidding.”

There was a neighbouring cottage, where resided a
good old woman who would often come in a friendly
manner to visit her mother during her sickness, and
whose benevolent disposition determined Charlotte to
solicit her attendance at this awful period—and what
neighbour could refuse at such a time?

She came and performed what Charlotte’s tender-
ness could not, and what, indeed, was repugnant to
Nature, and yet what must unavoidably be done.—

The

The old woman performed what was required in a decent manner. She had experienced the calamities of life, and from frequent deaths in her family, was rather inured to such melancholy occasions. In a few days the ceremony of the funeral was performed, and grief began gradually to wear off. "Why should affliction," said Charlotte, "continually guard my heart? We are all mortal, and all must die; besides, I am charged to take care of the living—that task must not be forgot. Was these little ones to cry for bread, my parent's spirit would be disturbed: no, it must not be; I will instantly seek for employment, before our little substance is gone."

She got her old neighbour to look after the house and children in her absence; and dressing herself in a neat, modest manner, went to the houses of several people of fashion, who, on hearing her story and seeing specimens of her curious work, very readily employed her; indeed there was something in Charlotte's person and address which pleaded strongly in her favour. She was not much turned of fourteen, of a middling stature; her shape the most delicate that can be imagined, her air easy and free as the first lady of a court, her face of the most pleasing complexion, her eyes of a fine blue, and her hair dark and shining, which flowed in graceful ringlets over her shoulders; her understanding naturally good, was improved by an education she received from her mother, who being possessed of all those accomplishments which are admired in ladies of birth and fortune, was the more capable of instructing her favourite daughter.

C H A P. II.

CHARLOTTE's Happiness: at being employed—Visited by the Ladies—ALBERT introduced, &c.

CHARLOTTE returned overjoyed at her success. She had brought some fine handkerchiefs and ruffles to work; and as soon as she entered the house, with tears of gratitude in her eyes, she kissed her little family, and embraced, with the utmost cordiality, her friendly neighbour; then kneeling down, she uttered the following ejaculation.

“ Most gracious God, please to accept the modest
 “ tribute of a grateful heart! Still continue thy kind
 “ protection and support, that I may be enabled to
 “ perform my duty and the will of my most ho-
 “ noured parent, which will be to me the highest fe-
 “ licity: and thou, dear spirit, behold your prostrate
 “ with all meekness, returning her sincere thanks to
 “ the Great Disposer of all things, for his bounty
 “ towards me and the rest of thy orphan family.”

Having uttered this, she rose up in the most chearful manner, and immediately went to provide a decent repast for them all; when, as soon as it was over, she put the house in the best decorum she could; for, as she had left directions with all her worthy employers, she had reason to expect at least a visit from some of them, and the conjecture, all must allow, was not ill founded.

Curiosity

Curiosity is a prevailing passion with all ranks of people; her story was of that nature which might excite in the highest degree, especially with those of refined sensations.

Charlotte went cheerfully about her work, and rose with the dark to pursue it, after first paying her orisons to the Divine Being, which she never neglected.

The scene of her retirement was not less romantic than agreeable; her little neat house was almost surrounded with trees, whose antiquity appeared in the wildness of their branches, which wreathed about in the most fantastic manner; many of their trunks were entirely hollow, and their roots appeared above ground for many yards: behind these were lofty hills covered with verdure, where sheep and goats brouzed and gambled; and under these hills ran a small silver stream, which murmuring over the pebbles, made a most pleasing sound, while various birds filled the place with the sweetest harmony. The front of the cot was shaded with jessamines and honey-suckles; on one side of the door was a bower covered with the same, and formed by her father when first he retired to this rural place.

Here Charlotte would sit when the weather was sultry, and pursue her early task, while the little ones played wantonly about.

One day, when she was seated in this pleasing arbour, and amusing herself with the following song, two ladies, unperceived, were advancing, but, on hearing, stopped awhile to listen.

B

SONG

S O N G.

I.

How sweet the bread of industry,
 With innocence and peace;
 The wants of nature to supply,
 And bid each joy encrease.

II.

Come, rosy health, to cheer my cot,
 Nor humbleness disdain;
 Contented with my homely lot,
 I never will complain.

III.

And you, ye little wantons, play,
 While I your food prepare;
 For you I'll work each passing day,
 And banish all your care,

As soon as Charlotte had finished her song, the ladies advanced, which she perceiving, arose in some little confusion, but soon recovered herself; and perceiving they were her patrons, made them each a very graceful curtsy, which they returned with the utmost affability. Such is the effects of good breeding, which never makes a distinction in civilities with the high or the low; indeed, those distinctions are never made but by the vulgar and untaught, and are ever held in contempt by those who are truly polite, or pitied, because they know no better.

Charlotte gave them a modest invitation to enter her cottage, which they very freely did, and expressed

pressed no small surprize at the elegant neatness of every thing they saw, and bestowed those praises which flow spontaneous from a generous mind, and which the modest Charlotte could only reply to by a curtsy and blushes.

"Well, Charlotte," said one of the ladies, "your story, we are satisfied, is no fiction, and you will pardon our curiosity which brought us to explore the beauties of your rural recess; and if you do not think our company disagreeable, we do not intend this shall be the only visit." Charlotte expressed the gratitude for the honour they did her, and said she should always be happy to see them. Alas! poor Charlotte; she little thought what was to be the consequence of this honour, but experienced it too fatally; at last, the ladies having staid as long as they thought proper, and having behaved in a very bountiful manner to the children, took their leaves, with a promise of coming again soon.

Charlotte, pleased as she was at the honour paid her, could not help feeling something in her mind which gave her a little uneasiness, and which she could by no means account for; but there is certainly a divining spirit which, although in a very dark manner, forbodes of troubles and sorrows.

Charlotte pursued her employment as usual, and made herself as chearful as possible, when in less than a week the ladies came again, with two others and a gentleman with them. Charlotte was rather more confused at this visit than the former, yet did all in her power to please them. It seems they had so extolled the beauty and qualifications of Charlottee, that

all their acquaintance longed to behold one whose story was so singular; and among the rest Albert, the gentleman who came with them: he was an officer in the army, of a good fortune, and great accomplishments. As a gentleman, his person manly, more than delicate; his figure tall, and his mind susceptible of the tenderest impressions: he no sooner saw Charlotte than he conceived a most violent and honourable passion for her, which his assiduities to her could not help being taken notice of by the ladies, who rallied him not a little on the occasion, and which caused Charlotte no little confusion; which when it was perceived, they thought proper to take their leave.

CHAP. III.

Letter from ALBERT to CHARLOTTE—Her Confusion increased—He visits her—Makes an Offer of his Hand, which at last she is prevailed upon to accept.

CHARLOTTE perceived, with some concern, the conquest she had made. She was, as yet, a total stranger to the passion of love; all her attention being taken up in performing the duty she had promised to her dying parent; and her utmost wish was to end her life in virgin purity: but Fate had ordered it otherwise. Albert, whose passion became daily more violent, sent a servant with the following letter to her.—

“ MOST

“ MOST ADORABLE CHARTOTTE !

“ BE not offended at this liberty from a stranger,
 “ who, prompted by an involuntary passion, wishes
 “ to lay his person and fortune at your feet. From
 “ the first moment I heard your story, my heart ex-
 “ panded in your favour; but when I saw your per-
 “ son, and heard the music of your tongue, and the
 “ richness of your modesty and understanding, my
 “ whole heart was instantly yours. Believe me, my
 “ dear girl, your worth is above fortune, and mine
 “ is sufficient for all the demands which can make
 “ us happy: do not think me too precipitate in this
 “ declaration; true love does not stand upon forma-
 “ lities and trifles; and mine is the genuine offspring
 “ of sincerity: I have a heart to offer you, unknown
 “ to deceit, and which abounds with every tender
 “ sentiment: it is you alone can make me happy,
 “ and without you I must be for ever miserable.
 “ Think on this letter as an intraductory visit to
 “ those I shall pay in future, which I hope will not
 “ be disagreeable to you. Adieu, my dearest Char-
 “ lotte !

“ ALBERT.”

When Charlotte had read this, she was in the ut-
 most perplexity how to behave; she had no objection
 to his person, for she had as yet never thought on one
 man more than another; neither did all the tender-
 ness and compliments he had paid make the least im-
 pression on her mind. She considered her present
 happy state as the most eligible that could possibly be;
 a husband might hinder her in the performance of her
 promised duty: he might be fond of her, yet morose
 to the children. Full of these cogitations, she re-
 solved to consult her old friend, and open the whole
 to

to her, and take her advice upon so serious a matter. This determination she put in execution immediately, and having disclosed every thing to her, begged she would, without reserve, speak her sentiments on the subject. The good old lady, having weighed it in her mind, proceeded thus—

“ My good Charlotte, the regard I had for your
 “ mother, and that I have for you, will direct me to
 “ be sincere.—You are at present a stranger to Al-
 “ bert; you know not his temper; it may be his
 “ grosser desires have got the upper hand of his
 “ cooler reason, which time may discover too late,
 “ and your life be embittered for ever; but if, on a
 “ better acquaintance, you should find he is dictated
 “ by Virtue, truth, and Love, your taking him for
 “ a husband will put it more in your power to fulfill
 “ the promise you made to your parent; his fortune
 “ will enable you to bring them up suitable to their
 “ birth, and his generosity will enable them to as-
 “ sume the rank which their parent formerly held in
 “ the world. Be cautious what encouragement you
 “ give him; yet receive him as a gentleman, with
 “ modest, good manners: let me know all that
 “ passes, and you may depend on my sincerity in all
 “ things.”

Charlotte thanked her for her candour, and returned to her cottage, rather more composed in her mind, and calling her little family together sat down to dinner, and then again to her work.

The next day, as she expected, Albert, with one of the ladies, whom he had made his confident, came to visit her, after some little chat, the lady, as

it was previously agreed, on some pretence, left them together, when Albert, falling on his knees, offered to kiss her hand, which she prudently drew back; he then, with the utmost earnestness, declared his passion, to which she said, she could give him no satisfactory reply at present, as their new acquaintance could by no means authorise her so to do. The lady coming in put a stop to any further conversation for the present, and the lover was obliged, though unwillingly, to take his leave, having first obtained permission to visit her. His letters and visits were now quite frequent; and there appeared so much sincerity in all his behaviour, that the truth of his love was no longer to be doubted, all of which was communicated to her careful counsellor, who advised her by all means to give him her hand: the ladies, too, interested themselves in Albert's behalf, so that she could not any longer refuse their earnest solicitations. Albert, after making her an ample settlement, and providing as amply for her children, received her hand at the altar: but, alas! her heart was still a stranger to Love—that precarious wounder of human hearts had cruelly kept his dart for another, and Charlotte was no better than a sacrifice at his altar.

Poor Charlotte! the days of thy happiness are but few; sorrow and everlasting anguish will soon ensue. Mistaken Albert, thine is the enjoyment of the body, but her soul is indifferent to thee: yet her virtue is sacred, nor can be defiled.

By the desire of Charlotte the Hymenial rites were as private as possible, and by her desire she was indulged for the present to reside in her old habitation. Albert was tender to the greatest degree, so that he
must

must hold the first place in her esteem; but what is cold esteem to the warm and ardent passion of Love? But even the transports of Albert were not of long duration; he was called on to join his regiment, and to proceed to the wars. This unexpected order filled him with grief; but as soldiers honour is more than his life, he must obey the mandate. Short was the time allowed him to prepare for his journey. He informed Charlotte of the business, and conjured her to make herself easy; that if it was his fate to fall in battle, he had taken care that the principal of his possessions should come to her, but said, he had a kind of prophetic idea that he should return unhurt to her arms again. After taking the most tender leave of her, and calling on Providence to direct and support her in his absence, he left her. Alas, poor Charlotte! the day of thy sorrow is at hand, for Werter, the unhappy Werter, will soon approach.

CH A P. IV.

WERTER's first Appearance—The Surprise of CHARLOTTE, and other Incidents in Consequence of their Meeting.

ALBERT had been gone about three weeks, and Charlotte, though she was sorry for his absence, made herself cheerful with her little family. It was her custom always, when the weather would permit, to sit under a tree near the house to dine, or
see

see the children play: it happened one of these holidays, as she used to call them, that Werter, a young gentleman of the most attractive form, and the most refined ideas, had rambled about in a studious manner, and came, by accident, to the spot where Charlotte was surrounded with her little wanton troop, who looked like so many Cupids, or rather Cherubims. The mildness of her look—the gracefulness of her person—and the dignified simplicity of her every action, made her appear to the eyes of Werter like an angel, more than a mortal. He stood for some time in the utmost astonishment; he could not even find words to apologize for his interruption: nor was the surprize of Charlotte less, the moment she cast her eyes towards him: she viewed his face, where Health seemed to lavish all her bloom; his eyes seemed to speak the language of love and most refined sense; his fine auburn hair flowed in artless curls—his person was elegant, and formed with the most exact symmetry, not tall or corpulent, but easy and genteel; and he altogether seemed to display a perfect figure of the refined gentleman. He approached by degrees, towards this little paradise, and bowing with the utmost respect, begged the lady would excuse his intrusion, which was merely the direction of Chance. She, in no little confusion, replied, that was apology sufficient, as nothing could be construed into a crime which was not intended; and as Charlotte was never backward in civilities, she brought him a chair, and asked him to sit down and rest himself, which he accepted, and finally completed his ruin. He played with the children, which seemed to delight Charlotte, yet she, at the same time, was taking large draughts of love.

Werter could not reconcile it that she should be mother to those children, as she was certainly too young, therefore he concluded on the right, that she was sister to them: further enquiries he dared not make, yet, in another conjecture he was wrong, that she was not married. After some innocent conversation, he took his leave. and Charlotte fell into the most profound reveree. "Good God!" she cried, "whence can these sensations come? O, Albert! what wilt thou be if ever you return? my aversion—no, that cannot be—yet I cannot return thy love. Should generosity like thine be thus rewarded? No, I will never injure thee—But have I not done it already? Has not this stranger taken sole possession of my heart? O fatal hour! when ever I gave consent—It was avarice—I know I did not love you—Unhappy man! My reason was blinded by persuasion, I should have been contented in the state I was in. What did I want for? I had content, the best of all blessings, I should have waited for this charming youth, this stranger unknown—but I rave—my brain is turned --I will lay me down on the turf to cool my heated mind."

Werter proceeded in a melancholy manner towards his home. Love filled all his thoughts; doubts and fears perplexed him. "Most dear Charlotte!" said he, (for he had heard one of the children call her so) "if you cannot be mine, I will die for you—But what can bar the claim? Perhaps she has given her heart to another—It must not be! To-morrow I will know more—Till then it is an age." In this perturbed manner he went to his chamber—he threw himself on the bed—rest was not there—
Sleep

Sleep had forsook her residence—she had fled, but not to Charlotte; she was alike tortured with all the miseries of a hopeless passion. Werter rose from his bed, lay down again, but to no purpose—the image of Charlotte was continually before him; he saw her adorned with every grace—“Heaven in her eye—in every action dignity and love.”

He tried to read—books were tedious—he laid them down—at length, in a pathetic passion, he sat down, and wrote the following rhapsody—

TO CHARLOTTE.

Tell me, Charlotte, what is love?
Didst thou e'er its tortures prove?
All its anxious doubts and fears,
All its sighs, its smiles, its tears?

II.

If you have, you then may't know
What is sorrow, what is woe;
What it is to wake all night,
Stranger to each soft delight.

III.

If it e'er has touched your breast,
If it robb'd you of your rest,
You may guess what Werter feels,
What his languid eye reveals.

IV.

Pity, then, ah! pity me,
Born to love but only thee;

C 2,

Let

Let a smile relieve his pain,
Nor treat his passion with disdain.

Soon as the morn had illuminated the eastern skies, the birds began to sing, and the shepherds to drive their sheep from the fold to crop the herbage of the verdant field, Werter left his chamber, and took his way towards the place, where resided the object that his soul paid its adoration to. He was soon there, and Charlotte was seated in the little bower with the children, at breakfast. He came in, and begged pardon again for his intrusion, declared he came to enquire after her health, and with more freedom than before sat himself down by her side, took her hand in his, which she insensibly let him do, while at the same time her cheeks were covered with blushes; but having recovered herself she gently drew her hand away. He pulled out his handkerchief to wipe off a tear that just then started from his eye, and dropped from his pocket the paper which contained the verses he had written, which Charlotte took up, and seeing her name, had the curiosity to read it, and as soon as she had done fastened away. Werter caught her in his arms, and made use of every effort to recover her, in which he succeeded at last, when kneeling in the most melting and plaintive tone, he declared his love, and her refusal would pronounce his death. Charlotte, with a look full of terror and pity, gently replied—“Alas, poor Werter! then thy fate is decreed, I never can be thine.”—“What says my Charlotte!” cried Werter, wildly; “never can be mine! Dear angel, say not so! What can you mean? Your breast beats with tenderness—Cruelty cannot inhabit there: your words surely conceal some mystery. Resolve me, for Heaven’s sake, instantly.”

Charlotte

Charlotte, in a trembling voice, cleared up the mystery as he had called.

"I am already married." Thunder could not strike the guilty with more terror: he fell in a swoon, and as soon as he recovered, raved in the most distracted manner, and would, if he had means, have destroyed himself immediately. At length, grief overcame him, and his rage was drowned in a deluge of tears.

CH A P. V.

WERTER and CHARLOTTE own how happy each of them are, and lament the Cause which made them so, with other Matters.

IT was some time before either of them were able to speak; at last, Werter broke the silence—
 "What malignant star governed the hour I was born!
 "Surely my fate is most severe; for if I am not deceived, thy countenance seems sorry that our fates
 "have thus set this inseparable bar between us. O!
 "tell me, Charlotte—speak some comfort to my desponding soul. Have you a passion for the lost, the
 "miserable Werter? Your silence, my dear Charlotte, leaves me yet in suspense. Say, oh! say,
 "how much above all others I am cursed;"—Ask
 "me not," said Charlotte, "what cannot with any
 "propriety in me be revealed; make yourself as easy
 "as you can; call Reason to your aid, and strive to
 "conquer

“conquer a passion which has nothing substantial for its basis: the purity of your mind I know would scorn the wretch who could prove unchaste and false to the solemn vows which she made at the altar. Had it not been so, I might have then been happy—but now it is too late to think of it.”—“Who is the wretch,” cried Werter, hastily. “Forbear,” said Charlotte, “to speak ill of my husband! he is all goodness, all truth, all tenderness and love: Honour has called him to fight the battles, but soon he will return, crowned with laurels: but where will be his triumph? Beauty and Love shall crown the brave; all his treasure was locked up with me: but he, alas! will find an empty casket: yet shall my honour never injure him.—No, Albert, I am thine, and though my life will be a life of sorrows, yet I will try to keep thy peace secure.”

At the name of Albert Werter started.—“What do I hear! let me know your story. Are you the enchanting lady of the wild? And is my friend your husband? Ill-fated Werter? O gentle Charlotte! tell me all, then; let me rush at once into the dark abyss of eternity! O cruel Fate! when first I heard of you, had I but come, you had been mine instead of Albert’s.”

Charlotte tried all she could to pacify him: she related every circumstance, from first to last, and concluded with admonitions, not precipitately to rush into the presence of the Almighty, but consider the dreadful consequence of self-murder. He fell now into a gloominess and settled melancholy; yet he often visited Charlotte, and fed his fancy with her beauties, and his mind with her virtues.

Charlotte

Charlotte lost her cheerfulness; her former innocent amusements could charm no more; yet in all her melancholy she still continued to pay strict obedience to the injunctions of her dying parents.

She thought it no crime for Werter to visit her, being satisfied in her mind of his honour and her own.

Werter forsook all company; but when he visited her, he would wander in the woods and most unfrequent places, trying every argument in favour of self-destruction. "What is self murder? he would say. "Is not the criminal who is condemned and "executed for crimes he wilfully committed, guilty "of self-murder? He knew the consequence before "perpetrated the fact, and knowing death would "surely be his doom, he was certainly guilty of self-murder; or else the law that condemns him is "guilty of murder. How many criminals are there "in one year who suffer the law, and are guilty of "self-murder! It may be urged, they do not wish to "die; but that plea cannot invalidate the argument. "I wish to die—my life is a burthen to me, and "next to him that gave it; who can have a greater "right over my life than myself? I will write to "Charlotte—I will make her acknowledge what I "say is just, and grant me leave to die." He accordingly wrote the following letter, and gave it to her himself—

"DEAREST CHARLOTTE!

"PERMIT a poor wretch to grant him a dispensation to quit this world, which he can no longer delight in, in search of happiness or obli-
"vion

" vision: in the future, the latter would be préférable.
 " Give me but your leave, and I am gone directly.
 " My torments, at any rate, cannot be greater than
 " they are in this; nay, they cannot equal them:
 " therefore, is it not reasonable to quit the greater
 " for the less? My brain is on fire—I cannot live
 " out of your presence, nor in it. Dismiss me
 " speedily, my dear Charlottee. What have I to
 " fear? I am guilty of no crime—unless loving of
 " you be a crime, and that surely cannot be. Na-
 " ture made you to be loved, or why should Albert
 " love you?

" Distracted WERTER."

CH A P. VI.

CHALOTTE'S *Letter to WERTER*—WERTER'S *last Parting*—ALBERT'S *Return*—CHALOTTE'S *Sorrows at WERTER'S Tomb*—*Conclusion*.

CHARLOTTE read this epistle with fear and trembling, and nearly mad herself. She was not so lost as not to think, with the greatest horror, on the crime of self-murder. She dreaded to see him, for his countenance was now so altered that he looked quite ghastly, and rather that we may conceive of a wretched spectre, from the other world than a living mortal of this. Indeed, when he had delivered the letter, he gave her such a look as

pierced

pierced her very soul, and only uttered—"Charlotte
"I shall see you once more," and then disappeared
in an instant.

"Charlotte, I shall see thee once," she said, repeating his words. "I will be ready for thee, my
"poor Werter, I will mingle my sorrows with thine
"once, and then farewell for ever. O Werter,
"Werter! Albert is coming. So he writes, I will
"write for thee—I will see thee once more, and then
"farewell for ever!"

Charlotte now sat down, and wrote the following
note to Werter.—

"UNHAPPY WERTER!

"TAKE this last from the unhappy Charlotte—
"our correspondence is at an end—our interviews
"must be no more; Albert returns, and our hearts
"are innocent from what may be suspected; yet jealousy is a dreadful passion, and why should he be
"tormented? It was the work of Fate—he could
"not help it. Yet, O Werter! let me conjure
"thee, once more, to call up resolution to your aid,
"to bear this load of life, as I am determined to do.
"You will not surely deny the last request of one
"who would only live or die for you, was it in her
"power. I have said too much—I am the property
"of another. O grating word! to a heart so soft as
"mine. I shall take my last leave of you when I
"give you this. Parting will be dreadful—but Albert comes.—O Werter! what will become of
"CHARLOTTE?"

Werter was true to his promise. He appeared at the bower; his arms were folded; his eyes sunk and dim; his lips pale and quivering; his hair hung in disorder: he received the letter trembling, and having read it, put it in his pocket, and kneeling at her feet, took hold of her hand, and looked up to her face, which was turned another way, and covered with her hand. "My dear Charlotte!" said he, "turn not your face away from your dying Werter; let me have a last farewell; a tender farewell, from those beauties which have undone me. Smile an adieu, and let my soul depart in peace. O turn to me, Charlotte!"

Charlotte, almost drowned in tears, turned to him. "Ah!" said she, "Can Werter bid me smile? Can a heart that is rent asunder smile? Will the thought that I shall never see thee more cause one idea of pleasure; if a chaste embrace will give you any satisfaction you shall have it, and may Heaven embrace thy soul!—but yet, O Werter? do not venture to tread that darksome road without a guide. Hark! I hear the trampling of horses—It is Albert. Adieu—adieu for ever!" Werter could scarcely say, "adieu," but with a frantic wildness in his countenance, he clasped her to his breast, and flung from her. She sunk down on the seat in the bower, and Albert, just then entering, caught her in his arms, and fondly imagined her sudden illness proceeded from the joy at his return. Mistaken mortal! no joy for thee, no transports shalt thou receive, but cold compliance is all you must expect, my Charlotte will be no more cheerful, no more will tune her soft melodious voice within the bower; her cheeks no more shall glow with the soft blushes of the roseate morn, but love and sad Despair,

pair, like to the canker worm, shall gnaw upon her heart; each charm shall fade, and soon the tomb receive her.

Werter, with every torture in his breast that it is possible the human frame can bear, entered his apartment, and in a paroxysm of madness, put a period to his existence, and by a note he left desired to be interred near to the spot where his dear Charlotte first saw him. His friends obeyed his will, and carved on the tomb-stone only the name of WERTER.

The news of his death soon reached the ears of Charlotte, which encreased her melancholy; but when she saw the tomb erected, she every morning and every evening visited it, and gathered the choicest flowers to strew upon it."

"Shade of my Werter," she would say, "hover yet awhile till Charlotte come—I shall not tarry long. I feel myself steal from me; the world swims round me. It cannot divide us long. In other worlds thou shalt be mine—Farewell to this!"

Thus she continued mourning, and her frame consuming, till at last she sunk into the arms of death, and to the last she called on Werter, by whose side she was laid, at the request of his friend, who had gained the secret of their loves by some papers he had left behind.

This tender story sure will call a tear
From virtuous lovers, that so fond a pair

By fate should meet with so severe a doom,
 In youthful life to sink into the tomb.
 Peace to their ashes, Fate can do no more,
 For this life's troubles now with them are o'er.

VIRTUE REWARDED:]

A RUSSIAN TALE.

AS Virtue is not confined to any particular region, but diffusive through the whole world, we are let to suppose the following tale of a young lady in Russia will prove acceptable to our readers.

Some time since, the Czar of Russia was smitten with the charms of a beautiful young lady, the daughter of a foreign merchant in Moscow. He first saw her in her father's house, where he dined one day: he was so much taken with her appearance that he offered her any terms she pleased, if she would live with him, which this virtuous young woman modestly refused; but dreading the effects of his authority, she left Moscow in the night, without communicating her design even to her parents. Having provided a little money for her support, she travelled on foot several miles into the country, till she arrived at a small village, where her nurse lived and her husband and their daughter, the young lady's foster-sister, to whom she discovered her intention of concealing herself in the wood near that village; and to prevent any discovery, she

she set out the same night, accompanied by the husband and daughter. The husband, being a timberman by trade, and well acquainted with the wood, conducted her to a little dry spot in the middle of a morass, and there he built a hut for her habitation. She had deposited her money with her nurse, to procure little necessaries for her support, which were faithfully conveyed to her by night by her nurse or her daughter, by one of whom she was constantly attended in the night-time.

The next day after her flight, the Czar called at her father's to see her, and finding her parents in anxious concern for their daughter, and himself disappointed, fancied it a plan of their own concerting. He became angry, and began to threaten them with the effects of his displeasure, if she was not produced: nothing was left to the parents but the most solemn protestations, with tears of real sorrow running down their cheeks, to convince him of their innocence and ignorance what was become of her, assuring him of their fears that some fatal disaster must have befallen her, as nothing belonging to her was missing, except what she had on at the time. The Czar, satisfied of their sincerity, ordered great search to be made for her, with the offer of a considerable reward to the person who should discover what was become of her, but to no purpose; the parents and relations, apprehending she was no more, went into mourning for her,

Above a year after this she was discovered by an accident. A colonel who had come from the army to see his friends, going a hunting into that wood, and following his game through the morass, came to the hut, and looking into it, saw a pretty young woman
in

in a mean dress. After enquiring of her who she was, and how she came to live in so solitary a place, he found out at last that she was the lady whose disappearance had made so great a noise: in the utmost confusion, and with the most fervent entreaties, she prayed him, on her knees, that he would not betray her; to which he replied, that he thought her danger was now past, as the Czar was then otherwise engaged; and that she might with safety discover herself, at least to her parents, with whom he would consult how matters should be managed. The lady agreed to his proposal, and he set out immediately, and overjoyed her parents with the happy discovery: the issue of their deliberations was to consult Madam Catherine (as she was then called) in what manner the affair should be opened to the Czar. The colonel went also upon this business, and was advised by Madam to come next morning, and she would introduce him to his Majesty, when he might make the discovery and claim the promised reward.

He went according to appointment, and being introduced, told the accident by which he had discovered the lady, and represented the miserable situation in which he found her, and what she must have suffered by being so long shut up in such a dismal place, from the delicacy of her sex. The Czar shewed a great deal of concern that he should have been the cause of all her sufferings, declaring that he would endeavour to make her amends. Here Madam Catherine suggested, that she thought the best amends his Majesty could make, was to give her a handsome fortune, and the colonel for a husband, who had the best right, having caught her in pursuit of his game. The Czar agreeing perfectly with Madam Catherine's sentiments, ordered one of his favourites to go with the colonel,

colonel, and bring the young lady home; where she arrived, to the inexpressible joy of her family and relations, who had all been in mourning for her. The marriage was under the direction, and at the expence of the Czar, who himself gave the bride to the bridegroom; saying, that he presented him with one of the most virtuous of women, and accompanied his declaration with very valuable presents, besides settling on her and her heirs, three thousand rubles a year. This lady lived highly-esteemed by the Czar, and every one who knew her; and thus was virtue, by resolution and perseverance, justly rewarded.

The Advantages of a Single Life.

SOLON, being come to the city of Milerus to see the Philosopher Thales, the first thing he said to him was, that he was astonished he had never expressed any wish to be married, and to have children. Thales did not then answer his question; but, a few days afterwards, he bribed a stranger to say, that he was just come from Athens, having left that place only ten days. Solon asked him, if he brought any news from that quarter. The stranger, who had been properly instructed by Thales, answered, that he had brought nothing new, except an account of the death of a young man, whose funeral all the citizens attended, because they said he was the son of a very great man, indeed, the honestest man in the city, who had then been absent a long time from home.

“ Ah,

“ Ah, (interrupted Solon) how unhappy must his poor father be! but what was his name?”—“ I have often heard it mentioned, (replied the stranger) but it is at present escaped me: I only remember, that they highly extolled his widow and justice.” Thus every answer increased the fear of Solon for his son, and, being filled with apprehensions, eagerly demanded of the stranger, if that unfortunate young man was not the son of Solon. The stranger having answered in the affirmative, Solon began to strike himself, and to utter every thing the most violent grief is accustomed to inspire. Thales then took Solon by the hand, and, bursting into a laughter, said to him, “ Solon, that which hinders me from marrying and having children is what has just now happened to you, and which, though thou art the most firm and valiant champion in philosophy, has made you a coward; but comfort yourself, there is nothing true in what you have now heard.”

F I N I S.



N: Prichard's Book

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